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### Perceptions of Whiteness

Eloise Doubleday  
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# Perceptions of Whiteness

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SIT Study Abroad Indonesia: Arts, Religion and Social  
Change

Spring 2019

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## Introduction

Since living abroad, others' perceptions of how I look have come to the forefront of my thoughts. Even living Madrid, Spain, it was made very clear to me that I could not pass as a Spaniard: my skin was too light, my hair too blond, my accent not Spanish. Before leaving for Indonesia I considered dying my hair darker in the hopes I would draw less attention and blend in a little more, but decided against it as the persistent sun would undo that effort. However, even if I had darkened my hair, I would still stand out. When we visit places like Tanah Lot, countless locals, as well as other tourists, ask me for photos. When shopping, I have noticed I am helped before others with darker skin, even if they had been shopping before me. I am clearly an "other" here, but in the best possible way, as my skin color allows me many privileges.

I find this glorification of white skin so intriguing as Indonesia was colonized by the Dutch in their recent history, and from what I have read about this period, it was not pleasant for the Indonesians. I did not understand why whiteness, which I see as linked to oppression, is valued here. This question, along with my experiences with locals here, formed the basis for my research project. And because I am a creative writing major, I am expressing my finds in poetry. My research began with observations, interactions I noticed while out touring and while with my Indonesian family in Kerambitan. I wrote down how people reacted to my sunburns and how my two-year-old host-niece did not see a difference between us, and counted how many locals asked me for photos. As I began to notice more, my curiosity expanded beyond just perceptions of whiteness amongst the Balinese to include concepts of beauty and knowledge of colonialism.

As a background for my study, I read Ricardo Millien's "Responses to Balinese Perceptions of Blackness" and analyzed the ways he went about his research. When creating my interview questions, I started with basic background information on my subject, used some of Ricardo's questions on perceptions of America and how the interviewee views themselves, and then added more that related to beauty, whiteness specifically, Dutch colonization, why whiteness is valued, and views on sun tanning. My first set of interviews took place in the rural village of Munduk Pakel, Bali. There, I interviewed a student currently attending IHDN University, two women who were born and raised in the village, and one man originally from Java. These interviewees had a multitude of different experiences, which provided rich content for my first poems.

After almost a week in Munduk Pakel, I moved to Canggu for three weeks, a known tourist hub. There, I interviewed two of the young workers at my guesthouse and a number of *warung*<sup>5</sup> owners working on the street where I lived. These interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and sent to Muhammad Afrizal Herawan for translation, before being used for the rest of my poetry. All of my participants will be named as 'Wayan A' through 'Wayan J' as they were guaranteed privacy in participation. Interview questions and one transcribed interview can be found in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

Some of my findings I had expected, such as a large reason whiteness is so valued is because, thanks to the Dutch, they find it incredibly beautiful. More surprisingly, however, was that whiteness does not directly link to the negative aspects of colonialism in many Balinese' minds. They do not see it as connected to oppressive, but remember its connections to wealth and power, both of which are desirable and make whiteness

valuable. It seemed an odd case of selective memory, but as one of my interviewees said, “what [the Dutch] say, we believe.” I used the information I gathered and combined it with my experiences as white in Bali to write the following poetry, hoping to show multiple perspectives on the complicated matter of race. I hope to humanize everyone’s experiences by writing poetry rather than a traditional analytical paper, and hope to show the nuances between people’s beliefs. This project forced me to open my eyes and watch how people interacted both around me and with me, and in doing so I gained a greater knowledge to inform my writing. Race is a complicated topic but through my poems I have attempted to shed some light and include a country little talked about.

The first three poems of this collection are from my previous paper titled “Village Analytical Paper,” written after a partial week spent in Munduk Pakel. Because that study was in preparation for this one, I have seen it fit to include the poems at the beginning of this collection. Information from the interviews conducted in Munduk Pakel was used to write this collection as well.



# The Poetry

A Double-Edged Sword  
26.03.19

You say you like my skin the best  
And white is what you see  
You praise my look, my skin, but lest  
You know the real me

You say that white is clean and fresh  
A healthy reality  
And shun the tanned, their race a mesh  
For white is true beauty

You say that physically I am  
Far more beautiful,  
You value me, this skin I tan  
As pure as virgin wool

I ask you why you value me  
Someone you've only met,  
Beauty is what you like to see  
Therefore, I've got it set

There's someone here beneath my skin,

A real person too,  
I love and hurt, have name and kin  
But worthy not to you

I pose for pics, I wave and hug,  
Countless are my smiles  
I am, for you, it seems, a drug,  
But don't forget my trails

I want to scream, to pout, say "no"  
I'm not part of the view  
I wish to know each place I go,  
But no, I am your zoo

I want a chance to know this place  
The one the West don't see  
But in Canggu, Sanur, I'm safe  
Here, they look like me

How to find the real truth,  
And people not like me  
When I cant pass the ticket booth  
Of what I want to see

Cleaning Products  
26.03.19

I take myself to *Indomaret*<sup>6</sup>

It's soap and lotion I need

But what I want is hard to get:

Ingredients I heed

Deodorant and shampoo too

All are filled with white

Chemicals designed for you

Make me a nasty sight

It's in the baby section I find

A soap I hope to trust

And lotions I pick the ones' designed

For reasons other than lust

But more than just at *Indomaret*<sup>7</sup>

You make the scrubs yourself

Boiled rice leaves chalky water I bet

Your products line your shelf

You'd scrub you down with rice and sand

*Lulur*<sup>8</sup> of milk and yolk

As “care,” your skin is raw and bland

A cause of poisoned soak

I know you think it’s all for looks,

To make you more than you

But I worry from what I’ve read in books:

Side effects are true

To me, you look neither fresher nor cleaner

Your beauty is from within

A smile, confidence, its all your demeanor

For we are naught but kin

*Sama*<sup>9</sup>  
26.03.19

She may be small, I may be tall, her skin may be darker than mine

But all she sees is *sama*<sup>10</sup>

We sit in the same chairs, both eating *semanka*<sup>11</sup> in time

She may be small, I may be tall, her skin may be darker than mine

But my home-painted nails, sheen matching hers are a sign

And she squeals so excited we're *sama*<sup>12</sup>

She may be small, I may be tall, her skin may be darker than mine

But all she sees is *sama*<sup>13</sup>

## Variations on Light and Dark

10.04.19

You come here, snowy down, satin cream,  
 glowing in a detestable way to you,  
 reflective, you think, and they smile with  
 teeth dark in comparison and say *putih*<sup>14</sup>,  
*cantik*<sup>15</sup>, *susu*<sup>16</sup>, means nothing to you, but  
 the smile conveys worth. You glow in their  
 eyes, pearly and perfect, a halo of God's own  
 light, be that whatever God you choose, you  
 would fit in amongst the candy floss clouds,  
 sunny sand beaches, white-wash walls of  
 tourist towns, they think every color  
 compliments you, nothing can mar your  
 ivory immaculateness. They value you, they  
 say, because who doesn't like to look at  
 beautiful things? And you, of course, are the  
 porcelain epitome, a desire and realization  
 all wrapped in one, an awe-inspiring chiffon  
 and daisy human, shades they might not  
 even have words for.

Compared to themselves, an ebony  
 excellence they don't see, you rise above.  
 You represent an intelligence, a monetary  
 worth, and a vision. And all that you  
 willingly offer up to the cruel sun, laying  
 there as an object on the ground below his  
 glare. He sucks the liquid from your veins,  
 pulling it from your body and drinking it,  
 leaving you parched, your previous pallor  
 gone, replaced by shades of fawn and sand  
 you think so lovely but which they can  
 hardly believe. You crinkle and wrinkle as  
 water loss makes your skin too big, and  
 smile as the colors deepen to granolas and  
 hazelnut. Some of them understand *cantik*<sup>17</sup>  
 in *Amerika*<sup>18</sup> is different, but they don't see  
 it in your darkening tones, they miss the  
 vanilla you used to be, the coconut they long  
 for, which you so careless discarded.

Narrative  
A prose poem  
11.04.19

You're brother picks you up, not your *Ibu*<sup>19</sup>, to walk you to your new home and as he carries your overly heavy bag on one shoulder, he worked in hotels in Australia, he informs you, you are filled in on your family for the next ten days: an *Ibu*<sup>20</sup> with bad knees, the tragic story behind a missing *Bapak*<sup>21</sup>, a shy younger brother, and an older sister, married, with a new infant, the member of whom you are most excited. You arrive at the house, nervous, trying to remember the walk there so you can retrace it later, your mouth full of names you struggle to pronounce correctly, face flushed with so many eyes on you, and the baby is on a mattress on the floor, snuggled beneath a pop-up mosquito net tent so you get down on your knees next to him to coo, and are informed you can take the tent off, so you gently wiggle his tiny fingers and toes. Later your first night you surprise one of your new brother's group of friends on the patio and they nervous laugh and speak behind hands at you, words which you have begun to learn but can't yet piece together and understand and their eyes can't seem to be moved from you though this time it's not from clothes, you're dressed respectfully conservative, and later when asking why they laugh and talk and how uncomfortable you are that you can't follow your brother tells you they've never seen a white person before, this is like meeting a celebrity, and your mind does some new gymnastics to comprehend that whiteness could be a new concept, since it's so normal you don't even see it anymore. Each day of your stay you work in some time to hold the baby, their weight so comforting in your arms, and every time the baby's father laughs *kopi dan susu*<sup>22</sup> at you with not a drop of malicious intent and asks you to bring the baby to *Amerika*<sup>23</sup> and teach him *Inggris*<sup>24</sup> and you just smile because you



don't know how to respond. You've lived so long in a homogeneous community you think you are "race blind," it never occurred to you that the baby being brown and you being white would be something to comment on, yes everyone here looks different from you and you notice being the other and their eyes but are still surprised but how much awe it creates in this home, and how are you supposed to respond to it? All you wanted was some peaceful time holding the baby but *putih*<sup>25</sup> and *hitam*<sup>26</sup> keep getting in the way and race becomes an over complicated concept you now must consider, but for now, you just sit and smile at their jokes, since the baby is just a baby and you're just you.

Haikus on Beauty  
15 & 16.04.19

Changing opinions:

Beauty as interior

Beauty from the heart

They tell me it is

attitude, behavior,

relativity

We are so focused

on what we see, we forget

there's inner beauty

I ask again and

again, *apa arti*

*kecantikan bagi*

*anda?*<sup>27</sup> *Apaka*

*ada standar kecantikan*

*di Bali?*<sup>28</sup> They say

You can't judge a book

by its cover, nor people

by skin color

Beauty is something

We can adore, idolize,

But we can not judge

They like big eyes, tall

and slim, long hair pointed nose,

but again they say

*Ngayah.*<sup>29</sup>

Daily Thoughts  
16.04.19

Today, the Notre-Dame burned

The police are criminally investigating the use of date rape drugs at my university

And I sit in my room in Canggu and contemplate

Tourist water usage

Plastic waste

And why I am so *cantik*<sup>30</sup> here.

I interview women, young and old, those who have been to *Amerika*,<sup>31</sup> know *orang di Amerika*,<sup>32</sup> and those who haven't and don't, about beauty in Bali. They say beauty is

From the heart

Confidence

*Tri Hita Karana*<sup>33</sup>

Inner

Attitude

How they talk; treat others; care

And those who make the *canang sari*<sup>34</sup>

When pressed, they tell me of physical standards for women, but if they care so little for exterior, so much for interior, why do they always call *cantik cantik*<sup>35</sup> when I pass?

They, who know nothing of my

Interior, attitude or confidence

Not whether I follow *Tri Hita Karana*<sup>36</sup> or make *canang sari*<sup>37</sup>

Call *cantik*<sup>38</sup> and *pintar*.<sup>39</sup>

So I contemplate. Which matters more: inner or outer?

What the Dutch Brought  
16.04.19

They have been conquered and colonized by the British, the Dutch, then the Japanese.

Compare this with Singapore, colonized by the British, and now considered more developed

They are jealous. Why were they not colonized by the British?

The Dutch just wanted to take (wealth)

The British also wanted to give (development)

The Dutch forced *kerja rodi*,<sup>40</sup> manual labor, day and night. They built roads, railways, harbors, hospitals and schools

And their humanity was ignored

Compensation in neither money nor use of what they created

They were physically exploited

Yes, they gained infrastructure, their important texts were preserved, and they were protected from missionaries

Some say it was bound to happen: people from cold countries would desire a warmer one (new food, plants, and animals). The cold forces thought about the future, about survival and strategy, the cold brings a lack of resources, movement and growth are a necessity

In warm climates, time moves slower, the threats don't exist, until people from the cold arrive, so it was bound to happen to Indonesia

But that doesn't mean it didn't hurt.

## Portrait of a Woman on a Motorbike

17.04.19

It's old, looks janky, red paint scratched silver, wires and footrests stick out, one side-view mirror missing the glass, she pulls on an old helmet too, visor down to shade her face, sick mask across her nose and mouth, though she is not sick. She wears a long sleeved, maroon bomber-like jacket despite the 32°C heat outside. Her jeans are faded black, with white socks tucked inside them, socks giving her alien feet as she forces them into flip-flops. She wears black gloves too, carefully tucked into the sleeves of her jacket. She climbs on, carefully covered besides her dark hair coming from under the helmet. Today, as every day, her skin will not darken on her drive, leaving her to arrive just as perfect as she left.

Small Talk  
17.04.19

“Looks like it might rain”

*“Mau Kemana?”*<sup>41</sup>

(Duh, obviously, we can all see the rain clouds)

(Don’t ask me that, it’s creepy)

“Yes, though I hope it doesn’t”

*“Jalan jalan”*<sup>42</sup> a smile

(These Americans, say such dumb things)

(These Indonesians, so nosy)

“Sure is nice out”

*“Darimana?”*<sup>43</sup>

“And how’s the weather where you’re from?”

*“Siapa namanya?”*<sup>44</sup>

It’s one thing to translate language, another to translate culture.



If Indonesia was colonized and oppressed by the Dutch so long, why is white skin so valued?  
16.04.19

She tells me

Because in Indonesia, difference is values right now.

Personally, she tells me

Because in this world there are lots of skin colors, her four best friends are *cina-balia*<sup>45</sup> and she respects that.

She tells me

White skin isn't linked to oppression, but instead linked to skill: the Dutch colonized for so long, they must be intelligent.

Personally, she tells me

It is beautiful.

He tells me

Maybe it's intelligence, but if you ask Indonesians if they would rather be white, they might not. Lighter, yes, but not white. However, white comes from somewhere else, far away, so it is special. White means beauty and wealth, while dark skin implies slaves and outdoor laborers.

Personally, he tells me

He doesn't care.

She tells me

Because physically, it looks more beautiful.

Personally, she tells me

Who doesn't like to see beautiful things?

She tells me

In history, the colonizers were white, and their position was higher, therefore they perceive white skin is higher class: "what [the Dutch] say, we believe." Now, it's like a whole new colonization, the colonization the idea of whiteness. In history, whiteness equaled exploitation, now, it equals good, better, impressive, the holders of truth, wealthy.

Personally, she tells me

Fifty-fifty, they treat her well and only accidentally have white skin, but they westernize Bali. They don't understand or value Balinese, "they change us." Stay home if you want western.

Brighter, Lighter, Whiter  
19.04.19

I am so *cantik*<sup>46</sup> they are jealous they say  
stroking my arm touching my leg or my hand  
indicating my infuriatingly un-tanned skin, they are so jealous they say  
and I ask them do you feel beautiful and they say  
sometimes, not really, or no  
I remind them they are they smile and brush my skin again with their hands and  
shake their heads  
I ask them would you change your skin color  
they shake their heads again, commending natural beauty and inner beauty  
healthy skin but not whiter skin  
and I ask if there are skin whitening products used they say yes  
list off scrubs, creams, medicines and injections but I ask if they use any they say no  
just *lulur*<sup>47</sup> to be healthier  
they say it's everywhere but no one says they use it, just scrubs,  
they want brighter, lighter,  
but not whiter

The Dancer  
19.04.19

The dancer waits backstage, being primped before her performance  
She is carefully dressed in her brightly colored clothes  
Aqua patterned sarong with a pink and gold *kebaya*<sup>48</sup>  
*Selandang*,<sup>49</sup> *streples*,<sup>50</sup> jewelry and hairpins  
And they layer the makeup on  
Pounds of it, giving her cake face no longer her natural color  
For her stage performance, watched by everyone who came to see her,  
She must show perfection in every aspect  
If she is not, then she must pretend to be perfect  
So they layer the makeup on  
Pounds of it, giving her cake face, until she is white.

Portrait of a *GoJek*<sup>51</sup> Driver  
29.04.19

You ride behind him, long having learned to not hold on like everyone else

He called your name when he pulled up, makes small talk about where you're from, and if you speak *Bahasa Indonesia*,<sup>52</sup> smiling when you respond *sedikit*<sup>53</sup>

He wears long track pants, despite the heat, and his green *GoJek*<sup>54</sup> jacket open over a black t-shirt, it flaps against you in the wind, aggressively brushing your bare legs and ballooning against your thinly covered torso

His *GoJek*<sup>55</sup> helmet is on, tinted visor over his eyes, but his smile makes you comfortable

His hands, steering the bike in front of you, are clad in black knit gloves, with use-worn hole over the knuckle of his right pointer finger

You know the gloves are to protect from sun, and you wonder at potential knuckle tan lines

And you wonder at sweat, and how he isn't melting in front of you, and how marginally lighter skin can matter so much more than comfort

Compare the Colors  
1.05.10

*Cantik*<sup>56</sup> and *Makasih*<sup>57</sup> and we hold our arms together

Compare the colors

Each jealous of the other's hue

*Ibu cantik*<sup>58</sup> and be-you-ti-ful and shaking heads full of laughter

Two *Pakaian Adat*,<sup>59</sup> one formal and one semi

Clay and rice on both foreheads

We hold our arms together

Compare the colors.

I may work on a tan and she may stay covered up

But we laugh at the difference and desire the other

And she compliments my nose

Straight and aquiline – a desire here

And we laugh and compare our arms

At home I put on my pajamas and my sister and I hold our arms together

Compare the colors

She so much paler than I

And we laugh and she groans and desires my color

compared with her winter white

Sisters but our skin so different

Hers *Ibu*<sup>60</sup> would love, *Ibu's*<sup>61</sup> I desire

And we laugh and hold our arms together

Compare the colors.

Populations  
3.05.19

To be the world's fourth largest country

A population to outstrip us all

Yet to have been colonized so recently

A population outstripped by them all

And to work in a *warung*<sup>62</sup>

Vying for tourists' money

Day by day hot sun little shade no fans

And the same wares as everyone from here to the *pantai*<sup>63</sup>

Elephant pants *bintang*<sup>64</sup> t-shirts penis bottle-openers fanny packs dream catchers and  
sunglasses

And how each price compares to his and hers and theirs and yours

And to speak some English

Enough for 'hello, come look, maybe buy, please and thank you'

To be the world's fourth largest country

A population to outstrip us all

And to know nothing of the shoppers

The Americans, Australians, Europeans and Asians

To speak some of their language but not history or culture

To know nothing of the colonizers

But that they were white and powerful

That they brought money and so-called intelligence



And therefore are desired

To live in this world

And sell to these people

And to know nothing of the history

Yet to be the world's fourth largest country

With a population to outstrip us all

What does that power mean now?

Skins  
3.05.19

Imagine we could take them off trade them around put new ones on like a coat or nice evening dress – imagine we could pick our own colors and hues unknown nothing natural – imagine I could be blue just as you want to be peach and she wants a tawny brown – imagine I didn't have to lay for hours under the scorch for a pseudo-tan and you didn't have to walk around all day in jeans and a jacket cloaked in the sun for a paler color – imagine if the *Indomaret*<sup>65</sup> shelves weren't stocked with lotions and creams filled with whitening chemicals and dermatologists with injections and medicines didn't call your name – imagine I wasn't *cantik*<sup>66</sup> because of my skin and you were even if you are *hitam*<sup>67</sup> – imagine where you're from was believable no matter your color – imagine race-blind and color-blind were real terms that meant something and were achievable – imagine we could be sisters or mother and daughter no matter how we looked – imagine skins and *kulit*<sup>68</sup> meaning nothing more than the largest organ in the human body

His Own Image  
3.05.19

So thoroughly a religious country under the Belief in One God

Six officially recognized religions and between them six central gods

Not to mention all the smaller individual deities each religion continues to worship

Yet, where is the knowledge that God made you perfect?

That God made you in his own image

That God made you as you are meant to be

Despite the insistence you wouldn't change your skin color

You misunderstand me

You wish not to be completely *putih*<sup>69</sup>

But you wish to be lighter

And you do strive for it

You are changing your skin color

Where is the knowledge that God made you perfect?

That we ought to love ourselves as he loves us

These may be Christian teachings

But that makes them no less applicable

You all have your own God

## Conclusions

The outcomes of this study offered many new perspectives on race and beauty amongst the Indonesians. The participants I interviewed can be categorized into two groups, those that have either been to America or have direct contact with it (such as teaching American students), and those whose knowledge of America and other western countries is limited and whose interactions with them are small. Participants from the first group, though informed of politics, mannerisms, and general life desires of the western world, still showed a preference for the superficial characteristics of westerners. They still valued the white skin, height, and straight noses normal amongst those of western descent. Those with little knowledge of the western world and, more interestingly, little knowledge of the Dutch colonization of Indonesia, also showed a preference for the superficial western characteristics. They linked white skin with money, with the tourism their economy relies on, with beauty, and with intelligence. I had assumed the link between whiteness and oppression would be more prevalent amongst Indonesians as the Dutch rule ended in many people's lifetime, but the Indonesian's do not make that connection. Instead, they call the Dutch smart for having the ability to conquer and maintain a hold over their massive country. They call the Dutch rich for the wealth they used to build the infrastructure that is now in use today. And they call the Dutch beautiful for their white skin, and for it was what the Dutch believed.

Whether or not my participants knew much of the history between Indonesia and the Western world, the preference for white skin was clear. My observations found people walking or on motorbike fully covered, even wearing gloves and socks in their sandals, to keep as much sun off of them as possible. Looking for toiletries I noticed an abundance of products for skin whitening as well as products for other purposes that still contained

whiting cream and chemicals. My interviewees also listed off doctors with special skin whitening injections and home made remedies and scrubs designed with the same effect in mind. And through these inquiries I noticed a striking juxtaposition. Almost all of my interviewees reported they would not wish to change their skin color, but most of them also reported using skin-whitening products. One reason for this contradiction could be that my question of the desire to change skin color was interpreted as change to a completely different race, which the Indonesians do not want. My conclusions drawn from this contrast are that Indonesians wish to remain as such, but as being so, wish to have the lightest skin possible. They do not wish to be white, but they wish to be brighter.

I learned much in my study about the ways race, especially whiteness, is perceived amongst Indonesians, and I attempted to capture these findings in this collection of poetry. However, many challenges were faced. The language barrier proved difficult as questions were misinterpreted by the participants, leading to unhelpful responses. Interviews conducted in English required more from my interviewee and for me to phrase complex questions in simpler ways. Interviews conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia*<sup>70</sup> meant I was unable to ask follow up questions and had to hope the participant would understand what I was trying to ask. It also made it difficult for me to ask participants to elaborate, as I was not always entirely sure of what they were saying. Other challenges included the possibility that participants were not entirely candid with me, as I was interviewing them about whiteness as a white woman. Because whiteness is so valued, they may have been nervous about offending me in their responses. There are many ways this study can be expanded upon, and for suggestions, please see section titled “Recommendations for Further Study” on page XXX.

### Glossary of Non-English Terms

1. *Sama* – “Same in Indonesian
2. *Gojek* – The Indonesian motorbike rental and ride company
3. *Bahasa Indonesia* – The national Indonesian language
4. *Bahasa Indonesia* – See note 2
5. *Warung* – A small Indonesian store
6. *Indomaret* – An Indonesian convenience store
7. *Indomaret* – See note 5
8. *Lulur* – An Indonesian body scrub used for the purpose of skin lightening
9. *Sama* – See note 1
10. *Sama* – See note 1
11. *Semangka* – “Watermelon” in Indonesian
12. *Sama* - See note 1
13. *Sama* – See note 1
14. *Putih* – “White” in Indonesian
15. *Cantik* – “Beautiful” in Indonesian
16. *Susu* – “Milk” or “cream” in Indonesian
17. *Cantik* – See note 6
18. *Amerika* – “America” in Indonesian
19. *Ibu* – “Mother” or “Mrs.” in Indonesian
20. *Ibu* – See note 10
21. *Bapak* – “Father” or “Mr.” in Indonesian
22. *Kopi dan susu* – “Coffee with milk” in Indonesian

23. *Amerika* – See note 9
24. *Inggris* – “English” in Indonesian
25. *Putih* – See note 5
26. *Hitam* – “Black” in Indonesian
27. *Apa arti kecantikan bagi anda?* – “What does beauty mean to you?” in Indonesian
28. *Apakah ada standar kecantikan di Bali?* – “Are there beauty standards in Bali?” in Indonesian
29. *Ngayah* – “Sincere” in Indonesian
30. *Cantik* – See note 6
31. *Amerika* – See note 9
32. *Orang di Amerika* – “People from America” in Indonesian
33. *Tri Hita Karana* – The Balinese three happiness causes: living in harmony with God, other humans, and the environment
34. *Canang sari* – Small offerings made of banana leaves, flowers, food, and water
35. *Cantik* – See note 6
36. *Tri Hita Karana* – See note 24
37. *Canang sari* – See note 25
38. *Cantik* – See note 6
39. *Pintar* – “Smart” in Indonesian
40. *Kerja rodi* – Forced manual labor
41. *Mau kemana?* – “Where are you going?” in Indonesian
42. *Jalan jalan* – “Just walking” in Indonesian
43. *Darimana?* – “Where are you from?” in Indonesian

44. *Siapa namanya?* – “What is your name?” in Indonesian
45. *Cina-balia* – People who are both Chinese and Balinese
46. *Cantik* – See note 6
47. *Lulur* – See note 7
48. *Kebaya* – The formal lace shirt worn in a *Pakaian Adat*<sup>71</sup>
49. *Selendang* – The sash worn in a *Pakaian Adat*<sup>72</sup>
50. *Streples* – The elastic waist piece worn in a *Pakaian Adat*<sup>73</sup>
51. *Gojek* – See note 1
52. *Bahasa Indonesia* – See note 2
53. *Sedikit* – “A little” in Indonesian
54. *Gojek* – See note 1
55. *Gojek* – See note 1
56. *Cantik* – See note 6
57. *Makasih* – “Thanks” in Indonesian
58. *Ibu cantik* – “Mother or Mrs. is beautiful” in Indonesian
59. *Pakaian Adat* – the Balinese formal style of dress
60. *Ibu* – See note 10
61. *Ibu* – See note 10
62. *Warung* – See note 4
63. *Pantai* – “Beach” in Indonesian
64. *Bintang* – “Star” in Indonesian and a brand of beer
65. *Indomaret* – See note 5
66. *Cantik* – See note 6



67. *Hitam* – See note 17

68. *Kulit* – “Skin” in Indonesian

69. *Putih* – See note 5

70. *Bahasa Indonesia* – See note 2

71. *Pakaian Adat* – See note 50

72. *Pakaian Adat* – See note 50

73. *Pakaian Adat* – See note 50

74. *Lulur* – See note 7

75. *Lulur* – See note 7

76. *Puri* – “Palace” in Indonesian

77. *Cina-Balia* – See note 45

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

This study looked at perceptions of race amongst Indonesians, though it focused specifically on perceptions of whiteness, and interviews were conducted solely on the island of Bali. Future studies should be broadened to include views of other races. Mainland Asia would be especially interesting, as Indonesians largely consider the Chinese and Japanese white. Additionally, study could be conducted to include more parts of Bali, as this one was focused in the village of Munduk Pakel and the beach town of Canggu. People from different parts may provide different opinions. If time and money allow, study on other islands of Indonesia would also provide far more information. Anonymous surveys may allow for more candid answers from participants, and a fuller mastery of the language would allow for insuring questions are understand and answered in completeness. If you have any questions, you can contact me at [eloisedoubleday@gmail.com](mailto:eloisedoubleday@gmail.com).

### **Appendix A**

#### List of Interview Questions in English and Indonesian

1. May I interview you? // Boleh saya mewawancarai anda?
2. May I record you? // Boleh saya merekam anda?
3. What is your name? // Siapa namanya?
4. How old are you? // Berapa umurnya?
5. What is your job? // Apa pekerjaan?
6. What is your religion? // Apa agama?
7. Where do you come from? // Berasal darimana?
8. What do you do every day? // Apa yang lakukan sehari-hari?
9. Who do you live with? Tinggal dengan siapa saja?
10. How many kids do you have? // Berapa punya anak?
11. Do you watch or read the news? // Apakah anda menonton berita?
12. What are your opinions on America? // Apa pendapat tentang Amerika?
13. What are your opinions on people from America? // Apa pendapat tentang orang dari Amerika?
14. How do you feel about your skin color? Are you proud of it? // Bagaimana perasaan anda tentang warna kulit anda? Apakah anda bangga hal itu?
15. Do you feel beautiful? // Apakah anda merasa cantik?
16. Would you change your skin color? // Apakah anda ingin mengubah warna kulit anda?
17. What does beauty mean to you? Are there beauty standards in Bali? Apa arti kecantikan bagi anda, dan apakah ada standar kecantikan di Bali?
18. What can you tell me about the relations between people with dark skin and people with light skin in Bali? Are there negative views from one skin color to the other? // Apa yang

bisa anda ceritakan tentang hubungan antara kulit yang lebih gelap dan kulit orang Bali yang terang? Apakah ada pandangan negatif dari orang berkulit terang de Bali terhadap orang berkulit gelap di Bali, atau sebaliknya?

19. Are there skin whitening products used in Bali? Why? // Apakah ada pemutih kulit yang digunakan di Bali? Kenapa?
20. Do you use any skin whitening products? // Apakah anda menggunakan pemutih atau lulur?
21. What are your opinions about the Dutch colonization? // Apa pendapat tentang kolonialisasi Belanda?
22. Why is white skin valued by Indonesians? // Mengapa kulit putih yang dihargai oleh orang Indonesia?
23. Do you value people with white skin? Why? // Apa anda menghargai orang dengan kulit putih? Kenapa?
24. What are your opinions about people sun tanning? // Apa pendapat tentang orang kulit putih yang berjemur?

**Appendix B**

## A Record in English of One Participant's Responses

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. [Wayan A]
4. Nineteen
5. A college student at IHDN
6. Tabanan
7. Hindu
8. She studies theology
9. She lives with her family: parents and an older brother, aged 25
10. None
11. Yes, and she reads the news (world news)
12. Good country because she knew Amerika with Obama, and he had a relationship with Indonesia.
13. People (me, as interviewer), her first impression is they have a good attitude like the Balinese people. She likes Americans who want to learn new things.
14. She is happy with her skin tone, and is proud of herself because she has the Balinese characteristic skin tone. Girls here don't anymore because they want to have white skin. She likes hers because the tourists like hers. She won a tourism ambassador competition, partially due to her skin color, as the nine other competitors had white skin.

15. Yes, "I think I'm beautiful." Having a confident attitude is beautiful, and inner beauty comes out due to confidence.
16. No, confident with her skin tone right now. In three or four years that may change, she doesn't know.
17. Beauty is from the heart. A good attitude, confident, good relationships with God, humans, and nature (three important values for Hindus). That makes a girl beautiful. Inner beauty comes before outer beauty. In Bali, when you have a good attitude, that girl has "*Ngayah*," meaning she is sincere, helps out in her obligations to Bali and to Hindus.
18. Dark skin is a characteristic of the Balinese; light skin usually means a mixed person with a foreigner parent with light skin. People here are not black, just brown. There is not a lot of problems with skin tones because there are many skin tones throughout Indonesia. For example, those from Papua are dark, from Bali are brown, and from Java and Sumatra are white. Not a lot of negative problems between the skin tones because the differences unite, as in the Indonesian motto "Unity in Diversity."
19. In Bali, scrubs or *lulur*,<sup>74</sup> some with rice and yolk or rice and coffee (lightening). Others with fruit, honey, or turmeric. Traditional ones are done with rice water.
20. Yes, she uses *lulur*<sup>75</sup> for clean and healthy skin. Many people use it, and she makes her own scrub.
21. The war between the Dutch and Indonesia was especially hard in Bali and Tabanan. There's a story in Tabanan of a wonder woman named Sagungayuwah. At age sixteen she fought with the Dutch to protect her *Puri*<sup>76</sup> because the Dutch had killed

her brothers first. After the war, she was kidnapped by the Dutch, taken to Lombok, and there died.

22. Because in Indonesia, difference is valued right now. Lots of religions create lots of opinions among people.

23. She values white skin because in the world there are lots of skin colors. Her four best friends have white skin; she is the only dark one (her friends are *cina-balia*<sup>77</sup>). Some people mock her about her dark skin, but she just ignores them. "Whatever about skin color, this is me, I love my skin."

24. No problem. Their skin usually turns red, not everyone tans.

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